

Loans to poor farmers in Uttaranchal

631. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of poor farmers who have been granted loans through banks in Uttaranchal under the Central schemes formulated in this behalf;

(b) whether some of the farmers are unable to repay the loan amount as agriculture work is non-profitable;

(c) if so, whether there is any scheme under consideration to provide financial essences to farmers in place of loan; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) Number of poor farmers financed and amount disbursed to Uttaranchal under various Government sponsored programmes are indicated below:—

(Amt. in lakh)

Schemes	2005-06		2006-07 upto Sept. 2006	
	No. of A/cs	Amount	No. of A/cs	Amount
SGSY*	1970	3368.64	856	964.40
PMRY	5987	4122.21	2868	1602.13
Special Component Plan	3478	732.52	1239	394.76
Total Agril. loans	258229	48419.78	NA	61266.89
Of 4 above to Small & Marginal Farmers	40478	32770.17	17347	11968.57
Rain Water harvesting scheme for SC/ST	—	—	261	24.53
Relief of 2% interest subsidy by Govt to farmers on crop loans availed during 2005-06@@	—	—	—	267.17

*No. of SHGs— actual number of beneficiaries are more as each SHG has 5-20 members

@@Against the sanction of Rs. 267.17 lakh a sum of Rs. 54.09 lakh released to 5 DCCB and Rs. 33.19 lakh in respect of 4 RRBs

(b) There are some arrears in repayment as recovery under SGSY, PMRY, SCP and agriculture loans were 64.48%, 57%, 46.18% and 71.48% respectively during the year 2005-06. Recovery during 2006-07 (upto Sept. 2006) was 76.64%, 58.29%, 63.85% and 74.68% respectively but no case of inability to repay by the farmers has been reported in the State.

(c) and (d) No Sir. However, In pursuance to the Government announcement to provide short-term credit to the farmers at 7% p.a. rate of interest, upto a principal amount of Rs. 3 lacs for Kharif and Rabi 2006-07, Reserve Bank of India has issued guidelines to Public Sector bank and NABARD has issued guidelines to Regional Rural Banks and Cooperative Banks. It has been decided to provide interest subvention to Public Sector Banks, RRBs and Cooperative Banks on their own funds used for Short Term Agriculture Production Credit and to provide concessional refinance to RRBs and Cooperatives.

Financial relief to senior citizens

632. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to give any financial relief to senior citizens above the age of 65 years or so in view of rising inflation which has hit them hard;

(b) whether Government earned interest from Senior Citizens Savings Schemes, taxable under Tax Deduction Sources (TDS);

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) whether Government propose to exempt such senior citizens from payment in Income Tax earned by them on their fixed deposits as well as on their saving bank accounts up to 15 lakhs per year, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) Government is already providing tax benefits to senior citizens of the age of 65 years and above under the Income Tax Act, 1961 as follows:—

(i) Higher exemption limit upto Rs. 1,85,000/-

(ii) Enhanced deduction upto Rs. 15,000/- under section 80D in respect of payment of medical insurance premium, as against Rs. 10,000/- for others.